

False glozing pleasures, casks of happiness,
 Foolish night-fires, womens and childrens
 wishes,
 Chases in Arras, gilded emprinesse,
 Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
 Embroider'd lyes, nothing between two
 dishes;
 These are the pleasures here.

He had been passionate in 'my fierce
 youth' (though
 saints have generally had a very human
 tendency to
 whiten their present by blackening their
 past); impulsive
 he remained. At thirty-six he married in as
 much haste
 as others at eighteen; and after long
 hesitation on the
 threshold of the Church, he was suddenly so
 swept away
 by an interview with Laud, who had been
 summoned
 from London for the purpose, 'that a tailor',
 says Walton,
 'was sent for to come speedily from *Salisbury*
 to *Wilton*, to
 take measure, and make his canonical
 clothes against next
 day³. Had Jane Danvers or the Church had to
 wait a little
 longer for Mr. Herbert, they might, perhaps,
 have waited
 long indeed. He had his touch of Hamlet—
 the weakness
 of those who lack, not so much the will to
 act, as the will
 to stop thinking how to act.

O raise me then! poore bees that work all
 day
 Sting my delay,
 Who have a work, as well as they,
 And much, much more.

As he himself has said, 'He had too
 thoughtful a wit:
 a wit, like a penknife in too narrow a
 sheath, too sharp
 for his body/ Perhaps it is fanciful to note
 that it was the
 edge that was so sharp, not the point:
 Herbert's mind
 could dichotomise, not penetrate nor
 strike. The same

image recurs, much less poetically, in the poems:

My thoughts are all a case of knives
Wounding my heart
With scattered smart,
As wat'ring-pots give flowers their lives.